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'Light bulbs, refrigerators, toilets, you name it,' Rand Paul said. | AP Photos

By [DARIUS DIXON](#) | 3/10/11 2:28 PM EST

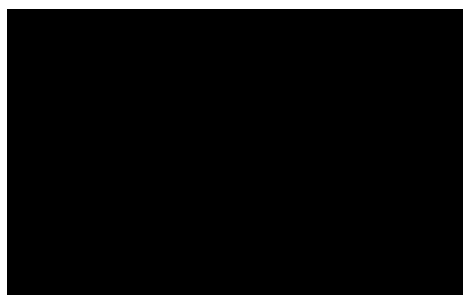
If the federal government can support abortion rights, why can't it also support light bulb choice, Sen. [Rand Paul](#) asked Thursday morning.

And don't even get him started about his toilet.

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VIDEO: Paul on light bulbs, refrigerators, toilets



The Kentucky [Republican](#) began making the link between the personal, the political and the plumbing-related when he asked Kathleen Hogan, the DOE deputy assistant secretary on energy efficiency, "I was wondering if you're pro-choice?"

"I'm pro-choice of bulbs," Hogan responded.

"Actually, that's the point," Paul said, during an appliance efficiency hearing at the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee.

"The point is that most members of your

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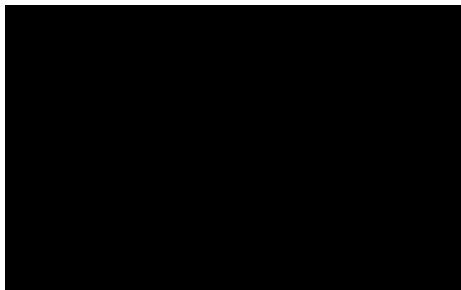
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administration probably would be frank and characterize themselves — and upfront — as being pro-choice for [abortion](#),” he said, “but you’re really anti-choice on every other consumer item.”

Paul continued on a string of attacks against federal [regulations](#) and labeled the lighting efficiency standards set by a 2007 energy law as just another government overreach.

“Light bulbs, refrigerators, toilets, you name it. You can’t go around your house without being told what to buy,” Paul said. “You restrict my purchases. You don’t care about my choices. You don’t care about the consumer.

“Frankly, my toilets don’t work in my house, and I blame you and people like you who want to tell me what I can install in my house,” Paul said. He added, “I find it insulting.

“I’m all for energy conservation but I wish you’d come here to extol me, to cajole me, to encourage,” he said. “But you come instead with fines [and] threats of jail.” (For the

record, at no point during the hearing did Hogan threaten to arrest Paul.)

Back to abortion, he said, “I think there should be self-examination from the administration on the idea that you favor a woman’s right to an abortion but you don’t favor a woman, or a man’s, right to choose what kind of light bulb, what kind of dishwasher.”

In the middle of her response to Paul’s line of comments, Hogan said, “My view is what you want —”

“Is to buy a toilet that works!” Paul interrupted.

Hogan replied: “I can help you find a toilet that works.”

“I’ve been waiting 20 years to talk about how bad these toilets are,” Paul later said.

Chairman [Jeff Bingaman](#) responded, “Well, I’m sorry about your toilet.”

Wyoming Republican Sen. [Mike Enzi](#), whose Better Use of Light Bulbs Act would repeal the lighting provisions in the 2007 energy law, didn’t attend the hearing.

After Paul’s comments, Sen. Jeanne Shaheen (D-N.H.) called out her ENR colleague, saying that “it behooves us all not to engage in name-calling of those officials who are trying to carry out the work, as the chairman has so well pointed out, that Congress has asked them to do.”

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